

of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

October 1994 Number 276

Editor Phil Collier

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc. encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. People with a range of backgrounds and knowledge are welcome as members.

Contact Don Hird (ph 34 4293) for more information, or write to GPO Box 68A, Hobart, 7001.

Butterflies of Tasmania

Butterflies of Tasmania is finally printed and available. There is a limited offer to members to buy the book for \$15 prior to the official launch. If you cannot get to the next meeting, phone Gilbert van Munster (29 6602) to secure your copy. This is a substantial discount on the shop price of \$19.95.

The launch of the butterfly book is to be held at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery on Tuesday 29 November at 6pm. Original paintings of the butterflies will also be exhibited at the launch. Members are asked to bring a plate of supper to share with Club members and our

guests. The book will be launched by Robyn Williams, the ABC science broadcaster. This should be a memorable event in the Club's history and all members are cordially invited and encouraged to attend.

There is also to be a launch of *Butterflies of Tasmania* in Sydney on 2 November. The butterfly paintings will be exhibited at the Charles Hewitt Gallery, Woollahra for three weeks from 4 November.

Please remember that the book will be on sale to everyone at the launch at the full price of \$19.95. Our pre-publication special price will expire the day before the launch in Hobart.

Programme

General meetings start at 7:45pm on the first Thursday of the month in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania. *Outings are usually held on the following Saturday meeting at 10am outside the main entrance to the Museum in Macquarie Street.*

- 3 Nov Elizabeth Turner, from the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, will speak on spiders.
- 5 Nov *An outing to the Waterworks with Elizabeth Turner showing us spiders. We will also keep a look out for the numerous orchids found at the Waterworks at this time of year.*
- 4 Nov — SGAP Wildflower Spectacular at the Hobart City Hall, 'featuring hundreds of our fantastic native plants'. Australian plants and crafts will be for sale. Open daily from 10am to 8pm.
- 6 Nov *The FieldNats will have a display, phone Don Hird if you can offer any assistance.*
- 29 Nov *6pm Launch of Butterflies of Tasmania. See above for details.*
- 1 Dec Alistair Richardson from the Zoology Department at the University will talk about amphipods. Amphipods are marine or freshwater crustaceans, such as sand hoppers, commonly seen around sea weed, and a food source for hooded plovers.
- 3 Dec *An outing to Snug Tiers or Mt Wellington. A chance to see the early wildflowers at the higher levels.*
- 2 Feb Peter Last will talk about sharks and rays. More details in the January Bulletin.

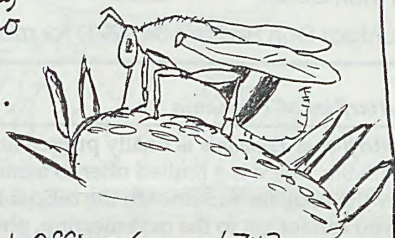
BUMBLEBEES WANTED

I am interested in studying the spread of Bumble bees in Tasmania, and would be pleased if anyone who sees a Bumblebee, or has some living at their place could let me know.

I am also interested in knowing what plants you see Bumblebees collecting pollen from.

Please write to: Amy Forster, c/- Post Office, Cygnet, 7112

Ph. 951 456



Anaspides tasmanicae

The mountain shrimp, *Anaspides tasmanicae*, only lives in Tasmania. You can see them in the alpine tarns and lakes up on Mt Field and Mt Wellington. In the little pond above the Chalet on Mt Wellington, you can usually catch them, if you don't mind freezing your hand off. The *A. tasmanicae* is a living fossil from the Permian period, about 250 million years ago. They live up to four years and most spend the winter in pools covered by thick ice. The shrimps eat sea mosses, algae and small invertebrates.

I caught one in October and accidentally killed it. So I decided to analyse him with help from my Mum. At CSIRO we extracted the lipids (fats) from the shrimp. We used a method of chromatography (separating compounds) to see what kinds of lipids they have. We found that the *Anaspides* didn't have any triglycerides (storage fat).

This is quite unusual in animals including humans—as we all have some extra triglycerides. The shrimp must not have much to eat during the winter months because it uses up all its reserves.

Jacob Virtue

White necked heron

North of Huonville, at Voss Road, I saw a White necked heron, latin name *Ardea pacifica*. They are uncommon in Tasmania, and only come when there is a drought on the mainland.

Huw Wilkins, Cygnet, age 8

South West Tasmania

It is the feeling of being in the middle of no-where, Which lures me back to the South West, if I dare, Where button grass plains stretch with no shelter at all, Yet endlessly their wilderness can call and call.

Memories of Aborigines sadly come to hand, And I wonder how they survived this desolate land. It's huge fringes of quartz white-sand beaches, Face the rolling sea which to Antarctica reaches.

This wilderness is a refuge for species we may never know, Where nesting rare Orange Bellied Parrots come and go. Its a contrast to the bustle and fumes of many a town, Untouched by pollution and land clearing—its part of Australia's crown.

I am an intruder, so I must face, The test of the Ironbonds to depart this place. It is sad to leave this land that's so unscarred by man, But I shall return when ever I can.

Owen Wilkins

President's Report

Butterflies of Tasmania is now more than just a flutter on the breeze! All members and friends are welcome at the launch, see elsewhere in this *Bulletin* for details.

Our conservation lobbying continues. We have contributed to a Commonwealth-instigated Tasmanian Conservation Priorities project, conducted thoroughly and energetically until recently by Sally Bryant. We are following up our initial contribution in an effort to get both a comprehensive document on this subject coupled with an ongoing monitoring process. We have also responded to an ALP policy paper on environment and biodiversity issues.

Our aim in lobbying is to maintain an independent and sophisticated approach. We have been emphasising the sparse survey effort for many animal and some plant groups, particularly in the context of ongoing industrial and domestic impact on many habitats. We have experienced two main problems in this area. First, we wonder if some consultation (eg on the State Government's Rare and Endangered Legislation) has been a "black hole". For example, we have requested reasons for dilution of the equivalent Commonwealth Legislation in some areas, and we have received an unsatisfactory response. Second, conservation lobbying is often publicly focussed on the most strident claims. For example, from another conservation network a claim that "unless every black swan in Tasmania is protected at every moment, then Wildlife Staff are negligent". Effective conservation needs to be both pragmatic and credible, thus our emphasis on identifying priorities.

Another disappointment lately arose from the Parks and Wildlife public-issue brochures on the barred bandicoot and eastern bettong. Tasmania is now the only stronghold for these two mammals. A fundamental criterion of modern conservation biology is identification of "reservation status" or an equivalent indicator of security of habitat. Despite this, neither brochure covers this topic. Whether or not this is a reflection of the current Tasmanian "No New Reserves" policy is a matter of conjecture, but when security of a range of habitats for each species appears tenuous one has to wonder.

Field Survey Group Report

We are working on a survey of Mt Nelson vertebrate fauna for the Hobart City Council. The survey is centred on the Lambert Gully system including part of the Skyline Reserve. The gully is a deeply incised valley which is a humid refuge surrounded by much drier northerly slopes. Although a smallish, narrow reserve, the bushland appears to have retained substantial integrity. The usual weeds such as boneseed, erica, cotoneaster and introduced black rats are evident but are not yet pervasive. Small and larger mammals are sparse but an interesting suite of reptiles and medium-sized mammals are still evident. A full report will be available after its delivery to Council.

The income from our Mt Nelson project has enabled us to acquire our own set of small mammal traps which will expedite our future survey efforts on a wider scale. For example, an overnight mammal survey on Snug Tiers may be undertaken in conjunction with the December excursion. We will need to work out a future program for mammal survey; for example, continuing work on Mt Wellington.

Don Hird

Tasman Peninsula Surprises

In mid-October Sue and I visited the Tasman Peninsula. On our walk to Cape Raoul we found a new population of the very rare eyebright *Euphrasia amphisysepala*. This species, previously only known from Cape Hauy, favours shady spots on steep dolerite cliffs.

At White Beach, on Sunday morning, I saw a single rainbow lorikeet feeding on black gum, *Eucalyptus ovata*. Perhaps this was an aviary escapee, but it knew its way around the blossom, just like mainland birds. (The next weekend we saw a budgerigar at Sisters Beach—that did look like an escapee.)

On Sunday afternoon we found four species of spider orchid. Three of these were at Lime Bay on a SGAP excursion: *Caladenia clavigera*, *C. aff. patersonii*, *C. filamentosa*. The fourth was near the airport: *C. venusta*. That's a very good haul of 'spiders' in one day.

Phil Collier

Outing to East Risdon Nature Reserve, 6 August 1994

It was a cold and breezy morning in mid-winter Hobart. Four starters set out for Geilston Bay where we met up with two others. The weather conditions were much kinder on the Eastern Shore, with a few glimpses of sunshine. A little black cormorant was sitting on a post keeping watch over the Bay.

We set out along the Shag Bay Heritage trail accompanied by the calls of Yellow throated honeyeaters. Many stones were turned in the search for snails and other critters with Kevin telling us that this area was one of the worst he knew for snail hunting. We enjoyed visiting the Aboriginal caves and observed many different rock formations. Apparently the natives lived mainly on mussels and shellfish with very few mammals being taken in this area. We imagined what the scene would have looked like 6000 years ago without the man-made intrusions. It was thought that the woodland would have looked very similar with much open country, due to constant burning by the natives.

Morning tea was declared at a pleasant rock platform on Shag Bay. We were lucky enough to catch a glimpse of a sea eagle which are occasionally seen around this area. A strange call was heard which could have been the sea eagle....a few minutes later we realised our mistake when Patti, Jake and a friend appeared over the horizon to join us for a couple of hours.

After morning tea we headed steeply up the hill and had lunch looking out over the Derwent River, making the

most of a few sunny breaks. The views of snow-covered Mount Wellington were superb (especially if you imagined the zinc works were not there). We continued north along the ridge top into East Risdon Nature Reserve. This reserve was established in 1971 to protect the endemic *Eucalyptus morrisbyi*. It also provides protection for *Eucalyptus risdonii*. As we walked along the ridge tops we stopped to observe the different eucalypts and looked for the hybrids which grow in the area. We were able to find *E. risdonii*, *E. amygdalina* and *E. viminalis*. At one point our president climbed a tree to collect specimens for further identification.

Many rocks, logs and man-made items of rubbish were overturned. The best finds came from under a sheet of old iron. Here we found a sleepy specimen of *Olios diana* (shield spider) which has a striking shield pattern on its underside, presumably to scare predators. This spider has a poisonous bite. The same location was also home to several brightly coloured jewel bugs, cockroaches and an old snake skin.

Other birds seen were a white faced heron, black headed honeyeaters and fairy wrens. The robins must have all been in hiding as we did not see one species.

Two species of snails were seen: *Caryodes dufresnii*, and the minute *Paralaoma caputspinulae*, both are common. Orchid leaves spotted included *Glossodia major*, *Thelymitra* sp., and *Acianthus* sp. *Pterostylis longifolia* (now known as *P. aff. tunstallii*) was in flower.

Some of the group ended a pleasant outing by visiting the Antarctic Display at the Museum. Kevin even found us a mounted specimen of the shield spider we had seen earlier in the day.

See *The Tasmanian Naturalist* No. 58 (August 1979) for a comprehensive paper entitled 'The Plant Communities of The East Risdon Nature Reserve'. A copy of this can be borrowed from the Field Nats library.

Sue Collier



New Members

A special welcome to our new members Ingrid Albion and George Hodges. Welcome also to Ruth Moore, born to Dianne and Graham on 7 October.

Orchids of Tasmania — Plant Identikit

Society for Growing Australian Plants Tasmania Inc., 96pp, illus., \$9.95 (text by Phil Collier)

Reviewed by Kevin Bonham

This is the first book exclusively about Tasmanian orchids for fifteen years. It is an inexpensive pocket-sized guide, focusing on species which are either common or distinctive. About 100 species are illustrated, with a further 30 or so being mentioned in text only. Omitted are mostly obscure species of *Caladenia*, *Thelymitra* and *Prasophyllum*; certainly there are no glaring omissions.

The colour illustrations are by five different artists, thus there is some variation in style and quality, however they succeed well in capturing the basic features of each species. The picture of the whole plant and not just the flower is a major advantage, but a clearer indication of stem heights for some species (especially *Prasophyllum*) is desirable. The only illustration which looks atypical is the *Thelymitra pauciflora* (p 78) which is much darker than usual.

The text is bright, straightforward and informative throughout. Information on distributions and flowering periods draws on a wide range of up-to-date Tasmanian knowledge, and is thus far more useful than that found in mainland orchid books. A few sample localities are given for each species. Although some are not readily accessible, brief habitat notes included with the distribution should help those searching for specific species.

The taxonomy is as up-to-date as is possible in a difficult time of frequent changes. Several recent name changes to well-known species are included, and this makes the book useful to all but the most dedicated specialists. At the same time the writing style makes it quite suitable for a general audience, including older children.

Overall this Identikit represents very good value for money and is the best place to start for anyone wishing to learn about Tasmanian orchids without being "thrown in the deep end". However, intending growers should note that the book is a rather ironic inclusion in the series published by SGAP, as it expressly avoids the difficult subject of orchid cultivation.

Kirrama Wildlife Tours

Host Klaus Uhlenhut

Reviewed by Phil Collier

We have recently travelled with Klaus Uhlenhut on a bird watching tour to the Iron Range, Musgrave and Lakefield NP on Cape York Peninsula. The tour was very personal with only five guests including us. The maximum possible is six guests when travelling with Kirrama.

Klaus is an expert bird watcher and an expert on reptiles with good knowledge of tropical butterflies. He takes great care over his guests, particularly ensuring that everyone has good views of all birds found on the tour. He adds a touch of his own personal humour to ensure that the whole tour remains light-hearted, but still dedicated to its aims.

This is not a tour for those who like to lay in bed on holiday. We were up before dawn every day, except the first, when Klaus slept in to his personal shame thereafter! This is one of the few tours of its kind that is fully accommodated, not camping.

The tour's aim was to find all the endemic birds of the Cape York Peninsula that don't migrate northwards in winter. This we did successfully, including the eclectus parrot, magnificent riflebird, rufous owl, red-cheeked parrot, and golden-shouldered parrot. Klaus has a fine ear for the local bird calls and uncanny ability to locate a nearby bird, which in dense rainforest is quite remarkable. Some birds were called up with a tape recording of their call, although this is not always successful in winter. Although Klaus prefers quality to quantity of birds, we saw 154 species in 8 days.

An aspect of this tour that will remain with us is staying in the 'guest house' at Lockhart River — an aboriginal community near the Iron Range. The close view of aboriginal culture under the modern umbrella of assistance was interesting. It was made much more so by lunch and dinner provided by the local store-keeper (an ex-restaurateur in New Guinea). His stories and excellent food were a highlight.

I can recommend strongly Kirrama Wildlife Tours and Klaus as a guide. Phone Klaus on 070 65 5181 for a brochure.

Schouten Island Survey, September 1993

Seven members visited Schouten Island from 16 to 22 September 1993. We were encouraged and assisted by Freycinet ranger staff, who expressed interest in having further survey work conducted on Schouten Island and assisted us with transport.

The aim of the visit was to survey all aspects of the island's natural history. We had in the party expertise on mammal and bird survey, and on marine rocky shore habitats. Prior reference was made to the 1982 paper in the Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania by Harris and Kirkpatrick called *The vegetation of Schouten Island*.

Camp was made at the huts on Morey's Bay. We surveyed the coastal rocky shore habitats approximately one kilometre in each direction from the campsite. Our intensive mammal survey was in the lower reaches of the Chinese Creek valley and nearby, where we also surveyed bats using audio recording equipment. Mammal tracks and signs were observed wherever possible. Where possible, we made observations of other things including plants, physiographic, historical and ethnographic features.

On the first full day, we followed the coastline westward from Moreys Bay, past Sandspit Point to Sandstone Bluff. We then climbed up Milligans Hill through open forest with a tangled heathy understorey before returning to camp. Next day we climber Bear Hill on the granite side of the island. On the third full day we followed Chinese Creek upstream to the

waterfall and onto the saddle where the dolerite and granite parts of the island meet. On the final day we explored the granite ridge above Passage Point as high as the 207 metre knoll.

Of the marine life, we saw many marine pill lice in rockpools at night and hermit crabs were common. Australian pilchard, a small silvery fish, were seen jumping at night under spotlight in the shallows. A rockpool fish with prominent vertical bands is unidentified as present.

In our night-time trapping in wet heath along the lower section of Chinese Creek gully we caught only brushtail possum. By spotlight we saw occasional pademelon and more brushtail possums. Water rats were on the beaches around dusk. We saw no signs of bandicoots, potoroids, echidnas, marsupicarnivores or macropods larger than pademelons. Three species of bat were revealed using call recording equipment, but identifications are tentative at this stage.

Notable bird sightings included a spotted quail-thrush in heathy open forest on the lower west bank of Chinese Creek and a pair of hooded plovers elsewhere.

A new skink record for the island was the ocellated skink at Bear Hill. Tasmanian frogslets and Ewings tree frogs were calling from the Chinese Creek Lagoon.

We located abundant live specimens of the land snails *Caryodes dufresnii* and *Bothyembrium tasmanicus*. *Helicarion arvii* was

also collected. We also recorded several species of centipede. One notable specimen had a previously unrecorded colour pattern.

We noted several orchid species additional to those in the list of Harris and Kirkpatrick (1982): *Acianthus caudatus*, *A. reniformis*, *Diuris longifolia*, *Glossodia major*, *Pterostylus grandiflora* and a *Thelymitra* sp.

Reference is sometimes made to Schouten Island as an important national park representing typical eastern Tasmanian dry sclerophyll habitats. While this may be true for some aspects of its biota, we suggest that its apparent lack of, for example, a normal mammal faunal component means that it is significantly depauperate, as many islands are.

We plan to make a return visit to Schouten Island. Further spring botanical surveys and visits to the seabird colonies should be especially worthwhile.

We express our gratitude to Geoff Cole, Yvonne Hill and especially Ian Marmion at Freycinet NP for their assistance and encouragement.

Don Hird



Valley of Two Creeks

In the last year I have been lucky enough to visit two of the nicest creek valleys to be found anywhere. Part of their charm is their seclusion — away from the chainsaws, cable-machines and four-wheel-drive tracks.

Chinese Creek drains the central northern portion of Schouten Island. Its tidal lagoon is behind one of the normal landing beaches and is regularly patrolled at close quarters by a sea eagle. The lagoon sponsors a chorus of froglets and tree frogs from its many emergent aquatic plants. The lagoon shore is forbidding, cutting grass and other prickles hide tiger snakes visiting the frogs.

Eastern Schouten Island is granite like Freycinet while the west is dolerite and sandstone. Chinese Creek is just on the granite. Looking up the creek from the beach, a band of cliffs is seen to cross a kilometre or two up the valley where there is a waterfall. The creek itself runs over and between granite outcrops in its lower reaches, through open dogwood forest which soon begins to give way to graceful Oyster Bay pine groves. Orchids, reptiles and a host of other details decorate the leaf litter and rocky slopes. Galaxia fish patrol the deeper pools of the stream.

The valley begins to steepen as we climb and the creek (named for last century's tin-mining community hereabouts) begins to shout and tumble though boulders. The pines grow even larger and more stately although many of their corpses strew the valley itself. This makes for a difficult scramble.

It is often necessary to retrace steps from blind alleys that only a creek can follow. The falls themselves aren't spectacular, except for the exquisite setting and the views to Freycinet through the pines.

After we scramble up and around the falls the valley is so open as to be almost a plateau. Another surprise is the scour holes of water-polished red granite, as smooth as on any commercial bank's edifice. Some of these are cylindrical, a metre or so across and deep. We find the claw of an unrecorded freshwater crayfish species.

At this point we left the valley which continues away towards Schouten Island's highest peak, having spent a very pleasant morning.

The other valley I have in mind is closer at hand. Towards the western end of the Wellington Range is Mt Marion, somewhat like Mt Wellington itself with its summit guarded by a line of dolerite cliffs. Illa Brook rises under these cliffs and finds its way down to the Derwent via the Lachlan River. Near the headwaters the brook traverses a flattish cutting-grass plain, the Midsky Swamp. (I kid you not, check your map!) This should be a good location for skipper butterflies which eat and subsist on cutting-grass.

I recently visited the valley at about 400 metres elevation. The Ringwood Track allows walking access to this end of the Wellington Reserve (or area in "trust" or whatever it is today). After a kilometre or two of climbing you look across a

creek valley to an imposing wall of sandstone cliffs. The valley contains Illa Brook and the cliffs lead to a feature cryptically named Frying Pan Hill. The cliffs are stained with characteristic white raptor guano, probably peregrine nests. We had walked this track a couple of times on exploratory walks around the Mt Marion-Collins Bonnet area.

Although really only a short reconnaissance, this is another beautiful creek bed. You start from a sandstone plateau which is the best wombat area that I know of near to Hobart. The scramble down the valley side goes from steep to precipitous scree. Surprisingly, it also changes from sandstone to dolerite, unpredicted by the geological map. It appears to me that the valley's southern wall of cliffs has been undercut by the creek being pushed away from the tougher dolerite on the northern side.

Much slipping sliding and avoiding dislodged scree allows access to the "almost-there" creek. When finally reached the active creek tumbles through large boulders of bright yellow sandstone. Although I haven't visited the Hawksbury sandstone country beloved of Sydney bushwalkers, this is the nearest thing in southern Tasmania to which I can compare it.

So steep was the valley and so short the winter daylight that exploration of the cliffs will just have to await another day, and another episode.

Don Hird

VERDE THE EMPEROR GUM MOTH CATERPILLAR

ONE DAY WE WOKE UP AND WE SAW A BIG GREEN CATERPILLAR CRAWLING OUT OF A MILK CARTON. MUM SAID IT WAS ON SOMEONES GUM TREE, IT WAS THE ONLY GREEN THING ON THE TREE, (BECAUSE IT HAD EATEN ALL THE LEAVES). IT WAS IN MILK CARTON FIRST..... BUT WE PUT IT IN AN ICE CREAM CONTAINER.

WE CUT A HOLE IN THE TOP AND STICKY TAPED A MAGNIFYING GLASS TO THE HOLE SO WE COULD SEE HIM. THEN ONE DAY AFTER WE HAD GONE FOR A WALK TO GET FRESH GUM LEAVES WE FOUND HIM SPINNING A COCOON SO WE LEFT HIM ALONE AND 2 DAYS LATER IT WAS FINISHED. IT WAS THIS BIG - TRUE SIZE AND HE WILL COME OUT IN SUMMER

